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Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Celebrates 25 Years with JoAnn Falletta this Season

Maestro Falletta's 25th anniversary season kicks off Saturday with Gil Shaham and 'Pictures at an Exhibition'

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra is overjoyed to celebrate the 25th anniversary of JoAnn Falletta as Music Director in their upcoming concert season, beginning this Saturday. Taking up the position in 1999, Falletta became the first woman to lead a major American orchestra — a pivotal step forward in music history, and an undeniable point of pride for Buffalo and the nation. This star-studded BPO season commemorates Falletta's contributions to the BPO's legacy and to orchestral music in its entirety, with celebratory symphonic works like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Ode to Joy), fan-favorite guests including Gil Shaham and Fabio Bidini, and special occasions marking Rachmaninoff's bicentennial, the total solar eclipse next April (The Planets), and more.

Falletta has become a cultural pillar of Western NY over the past 25 years, bringing the BPO to the level of prominence it upholds today through countless accomplishments and initiatives:

- Beginning the BPO's relationship with the Naxos record label and developing its status as a leading recording orchestra for Naxos, with 28 albums recorded for international distribution — two of which are Grammy award-winning
- Founding Beau Fleuve Records with the orchestra in 1999, through which the BPO has produced 30 albums, many now internationally available on digital streaming services via Naxos in honor of Falletta's anniversary
- Premiering 22 new orchestral works with the BPO, including numerous world premieres
- Advancing the musical canon with the commission of eight major new works for orchestra by composers including Daron Hagen, Wang Jie, and Russell Platt, premiered by the BPO and featuring BPO musicians as soloists
- Bringing the world's most renowned solo musicians to perform with the BPO such as Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Lang Lang, and Renée Fleming, giving audiences opportunities to enjoy international talent while building relationships between the soloists and Buffalo
- Leading the orchestra in their first international tour in three decades (Poland), in addition to five tours of Florida and three Carnegie Hall performances, delivering Buffalo's artistry to the world stage
- Cultivating a partnership with Buffalo Toronto Public Media's WNED, resulting in local and national radio broadcasts of BPO concerts, "JoAnn's Classical Corner" segments every weekday on 94.5 FM, the *Intimate Portrait* series on PBS, and the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition — the world's first concerto competition for classical guitarists with full orchestra, leading to many premieres of new concertos for Falletta's first instrument, guitar
- Guiding the orchestra in broadcasts on *Performance Today*, *SymphonyCast*, *From the Top*, and nationally broadcast specials on PBS and Sirius XM
- Coordinating with regional arts and community organizations for enriching performances and benefit concerts, bringing awareness to social issues and the hope for unity following tragic events in the Buffalo region
- Heading collaborations with students, faculty, and alumni of SUNY Fredonia's School of Music, the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, Canisius University, and the Mannes School of Music
- Championing, programming, mentoring, and advocating for underrepresented conductors, composers, and musicians in Buffalo and beyond
- Receiving honors with the BPO including numerous ASCAP awards, such as the top award for Adventurous Programming

On her silver anniversary, Falletta states: “These 25 years with the Buffalo Philharmonic have been the artistic highlight of my life. Working with the superb musicians of the orchestra is an extraordinary privilege, and the unwavering support of our board, of Dan Hart and his great team, and of our cherished volunteers and audience has created an ideal environment for development, exploration, and deeply rewarding music. I am especially grateful to be here in Buffalo and have the honor of performing with and for people who share my passion for music that speaks to everyone.”

The celebration begins this Saturday in the orchestra's Opening Night program, featuring world-renowned violinist Gil Shaham in Tchaikovsky's violin concerto, and Mussorgsky's thrilling *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Visit bpo.org/opening-night for details and tickets, and bpo.org/gala for details on joining the night's pre and post-concert Gala festivities.

Find images [here](#). For additional information, interviews, photos, or video, contact Simone Viola at sviola@bpo.org or (716) 242-7814.

About JoAnn Falletta:

Multiple Grammy Award-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta serves as Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Music Director Laureate of the Virginia Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Brevard Music Center, and Conductor Laureate of the Hawaii Symphony. Recently named as one of the 50 great conductors of all time by Gramophone Magazine and among the top 10 conductors today by David Hurwitz of ClassicsToday.com, she is hailed for her work as a conductor, recording artist, audience builder, and champion of American composers.

As Music Director of the Buffalo Philharmonic, Falletta became the first woman to lead a major American orchestra and has been credited with bringing the Philharmonic to an unprecedented level of national and international prominence. The Buffalo Philharmonic has become one of the leading recording orchestras for Naxos, with two Grammy Award-winning recordings. In honor of Falletta's 25th anniversary with the BPO, being celebrated this season, Naxos released 20 full albums of music previously available only on CD, across all major streaming platforms.

Internationally, Falletta has conducted many of the most prominent orchestras in Europe, Asia, and South America, including recent and upcoming concerts in Spain, Sweden, Germany, Brazil, and Croatia. Her recent and upcoming North American guest conducting includes the National Symphony, the orchestras of Boston, Baltimore, Detroit, Nashville, Indianapolis, Houston, Toronto, Milwaukee, Vancouver, Quebec, and a concert at Alice Tully Hall with her alma mater, The Juilliard School Orchestra. In 2022, she led the National

Symphony in two PBS televised specials for New Year's Eve and the 50th Anniversary of the Kennedy Center, and made her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut at the Tanglewood Music Festival.

With a discography of over 125 titles, JoAnn is a leading recording artist for Naxos. She has won two individual Grammy Awards, including the 2021 Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance as conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic in the world premiere Naxos recording of Richard Danielpour's The Passion of Yeshua, and the 2019 Grammy Award as conductor of the London Symphony for Spiritualist by Kenneth Fuchs. Her Naxos recording of John Corigliano's Mr. Tambourine Man: Seven Poems of Bob Dylan with the BPO received two Grammys in 2008, and her 2020 Naxos recording with the BPO of orchestral music of Florent Schmitt received the prestigious Diapason d'Or Award.

Falletta is a member of the esteemed American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has served by Presidential appointment as a Member of the National Council on the Arts during the Bush and Obama administrations, and is the recipient of many of the most prestigious conducting awards. She has conducted over 1,600 orchestral works by more than 600 composers, 135 works by more than 70 women composers, and well over 150 U.S. and world premieres. ASCAP has honored her as "a leading force for music of our time." In 2019, JoAnn was named Performance Today's first Classical Woman of The Year.

After earning her bachelor's degree at Mannes, Falletta received master's and doctoral degrees from The Juilliard School.

For more information, visit joannfalletta.com.

To learn more about the BPO's storied history, distinguished conductors and world-class musicians, and commitment to IDEA, visit the [Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra](#).



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